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CHRISTIANITY AND DEMOCRACY

– Jacques Maritain

THE

Commonweal

Jacques Maritain

Jean C. de Menasce **James Collins**

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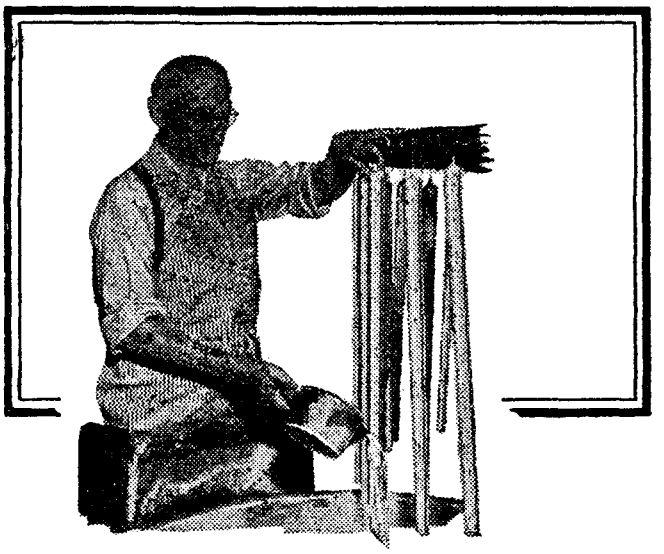

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THE
Commonweal
week by week

THE WORD FOR MARITAIN

WHAT is the very special appeal of Jacques Maritain that every year his importance should grow greater, and that generations of young Catholics—in this country and abroad—should look to him as they look to no other man of their own times? Why is it that his books, above all the other earnest Thomistic studies published every year, should be a source of constant inspiration? What, in a word, is there about Maritain, an extremely modest man, that has made him into a living legend, a Hero, for so many?

If one were to set down the usual qualifications for the Hero in our society, Maritain's personal characteristics and career would probably seem wholly out of joint with the times. This is the age of the activist, the era of the men who *do* things: and Maritain is a professional Thinker, a philosopher. This is the age of the package-job inspirational, the era of Five Easy Ways to do *anything*: and Maritain demands painful distinctions and hard thinking. This is an anti-intellectual age, the era of the slick slogan and the calculated appeal to passion and prejudice: and Maritain has given his whole life to service of the intellect and an utterly disinterested search for Truth. This is an era of the cynic and wise guy in the world of affairs and of the skeptic and hard-bitten existentialist in the world of thought: and Maritain is a man of religious faith who has ever shown an abiding trust in the power of the human mind to grasp truth and a steadfast loyalty to the claims of reason. This, finally, is the era of the sanctimonious philistine: and Maritain has ever manifested profound reverence and wonder for the beauties of creative art.

Name any half-dozen of the great figures on the world scene today; look at the titles dominating the bestseller lists; watch national developments and international news in the newspapers; turn on the television or go to a movie—and then it will be clear that this man Maritain stands for something—for a number of things—that are denigrated and betrayed by the whole tone of our society. And yet Jacques Maritain is a Hero—maybe precisely because he does stand for so much, the value of which we realize without admitting he is a Hero.

Maritain above all other Catholic scholars has brought the treasures of Christian wisdom to those who have been cut off from their natural home. He has been able to do this, first because he is a philosophical genius and no man can dismiss him without dismissing the claims of reason. But more significant, Maritain has been a humble man and patient and does not demand of others what only God can give—namely the gift of faith. Even faith can be flourished like a sword, even the zealous and devout can forget that those who live by the sword will perish that way. But Maritain has shown us that we carry the truth in fragile vessels and that not to handle it reverently is to betray it. Maritain never identifies himself with the truth he serves and defends. As unwavering as he is in that devotion and sureness, he never swaggers nor has he ever even slightly played the intellectual bully. He has always been more interested in living by the truth than in defending it, and in living it, he has given it its greatest defense.

IF one were to try to find a single word to sum up the character of Maritain, his contribution to our times and his attitude toward all that is, it would be that same word by which the Church of Christ is known. Maritain is a Catholic, in all the rich meaning of the word. Nothing that is, is alien to him; nor is there any truth, any reality which for him stands alone. He sees everything in the universe in its wholeness (its catholicity), existing independently, one level of being from another, but yet all wondrously forming part of a divine mosaic.

With Maritain, nothing is meaningless—except that which truly is not but only seems to be. With the meaning this philosophic catholicity and Catholic faith of his give to the universe, there is no place for rejection or negation of anything that truly is. And that is why Maritain's studies cover so wide a range: art, metaphysics, politics, psychol-

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ogy, science. He has taught us that to be a Christian is to see all things as they are because God Who is our Father has made them all. In Maritain there is no horror of the unfamiliar, no fear of knowledge, no desperate rejection of what one does not yet understand; most of all there is no slight rejection of persons, whoever they are or however intermingled with error is the limited truth they have. He is a poised man.

Without Saint Thomas, Maritain would say, he would be nothing as a philosopher. He—our master—is ever ready to acknowledge his own infinite debt to the Doctor called angelic. "Woe to me," he wrote once, "if I am not Thomisized!" Seven centuries after the great Aquinas lived, Maritain has spoken for him to a world seemingly bent on intellectual and physical suicide. Maritain's own intellectual virtues are those of the great Dominican —and there are some who say the resemblance does not end there.

If it is true to say that Maritain is authentically and brilliantly Thomistic, it is also true that Thomas himself, with his concern and reverence for all that truly is, was authentically and brilliantly Catholic. To be a Catholic is to be in love with an ideal that on earth is, in one sense, never reached; at its best, it is to desire to know and serve and love all that truly is; it is consciously and confidently to crave after Being. When one satisfies himself with something less than being, he is that much cut off from the Vision that will alone satisfy his infinite desires. And that, it seems, above all else, is why Maritain is our hero. He has shown, both in his study and his life, what it is to accept reality and see it as it is related to the Alpha and Omega of all existence.

He is our hero because he has shown us, beyond our hopes, what it is to be a Catholic; having known him, we can never rest satisfied with what is less than wholeness. We are left with our strivings and the faith that some day we will no longer see through a glass, darkly.

NEXT WEEK

MARTIN TURNELL writes about the French novelist, Marcel Jouhandeau:

"In medieval times religion was not a special department of life or Christian writing necessarily a special department of writing. There was continuity between what might in the widest sense be called religious experience. Religion provided the writer with a universal system and extended instead of narrowing his field. From the seventeenth century onwards the position is gradually reversed. Instead of religion imposing its pattern on the writer, it is the writer who imposes a personal pattern on religion. Very few contemporary writers, whether Catholic or Protestant, can escape the charge of using their books to propagate a private religion. . . . The guilt-ridden writers of the nineteenth century looked longingly back to the 'lost paradise' of childhood which was the great symbol of innocence. The twentieth-century writer is not much interested in innocence, or rather he is only interested in the loss of innocence."

GUATEMALA

THE background for the increased Communist influence in Guatemala sounds familiar enough. There were the military dictatorship, the wealthy landowners, the destitute and resentful farm workers. Membership in the Communist Party itself was—and still is—low, but the Communists had a hand in school reform and the organizing of the workers. It is the Communists who are most assiduously wooing the country's rural elements by identifying themselves also with land reform.

In a situation like this the international Communist apparatus has many advantages. Guatemalan Communists pose not as Soviet agents but as patriotic nationalists. Labor unions, youth groups, peace and student organizations become federated with international "Democratic" "Popular" front groups. Latin American Communists receive special training in a school for Latin America in Eastern Europe. One of the Party's cleverest devices in Guatemala is to influence the course of government by taking part in the policy activities of the National Democratic Front.

The cry of "Yankee Imperialism" all too often evokes a sympathetic response from Latin Americans understandably resentful of their still wretched lot. The purchase of arms from Czechoslovakia had popular support from the fact that the United States has refused to supply Guatemala even with small arms since 1949.

Communist propagandists in Guatemala therefore have many advantages. What can the United States do to counter the headway they are making so near the strategic Canal? One answer is a show of force. Supplying arms by airlift to neighboring Nicaragua and Honduras was one means of maintaining a certain balance among the armed forces of those countries. The recent "goodwill flight" of three big bombers of the United States Air Force constituted an unmistakable warning.

But our intervention even in a region where our

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armed might is clearly preponderant involves terrific risks. It has been tragically demonstrated in other countries that foreign intervention of this sort tends to unite a nation behind a leader hitherto in precarious control. It also arouses anti-American feelings in neighboring and other countries, thereby greatly aiding the Communist cause.

In this case there is the instrument provided last March by the meeting at Caracas. If the Organization of American States were to investigate the recent arms shipment and the various Communist activities in Guatemala, perhaps the tide might be turned. A helpful element in the present crisis is the strained condition of diplomatic relations between Guatemala and her immediate neighbors, emphasized by withdrawal of various personnel. Another possible source of Communist disaffection is the restiveness of the Guatemalan Army under the Arbenz regime.

But our big potential weapon continues to be our democratic message. Because of the operations of our big companies in the Latin American area and the ceaseless propaganda of the Communists we have too often been cast in the role of the oppressors, for all our pretensions about human liberty and the more abundant life. As in Asia we have been identified with the colonial powers.

We have neglected the peoples of Latin America in our desperate efforts to build up Western Europe's all-important defenses. With our economy-mindedness and lack of vision we have, among other things, failed to supply on an extensive enough scale the sort of Point Four programs that would present democracy in action in the most convincing manner possible.

And therefore, even close to our homeland and vital strategic bases, the Soviet world continues to take the initiative and make alarming headway, seemingly from within. How much longer can we afford to allow the Communists to make black out to be white and their slave system the apparent instrument of human liberation?

THE CASE OF DR. BUNCHE

PRESIDENT Eisenhower recently remarked about Dr. Ralph Bunche that this country simply cannot afford to let such a good man work for the UN rather than the United States. It might be said more accurately that the United States cannot afford *not* to have Dr. Bunche working for the UN, for in his present position he has done more to give the lie to Communist propaganda about U.S. racism than almost any other person.

Yet no one should think of Dr. Bunche as a "token" Negro; he is not the kind of man sometimes found in government agencies and private organizations and thought of as "our Negro." White, black, yellow or red, Dr. Bunche would be a distinguished American. The fact that he is a Negro only means that in achieving his present eminence he overcame even more obstacles than most poor boys meet. Everything he is and has he won the hard way. He worked his way through college. He spent years of hard, grinding application at anthropology, ethnology and political science. He made a name for himself in the State Department, and he achieved international fame by his work with the UN Palestine Commission. Winning the Nobel Peace Prize was an honor for him, as it is for any man. Yet in his case it was an eminently fitting honor. Dr. Bunche has labored in the cause of peace, and in the process he has demonstrated that democracy has real promise and meaning and substance, no matter how often betrayed.

Now, to our deep regret, some of this good work has been undone. Operating under a Presidential order, the International Organizations Employes Loyalty Board has already cleared over seventeen hundred United States members of the UN staff. It has been examining some one hundred and sixty cases, and until recently one of these was that of Dr. Bunche, who spent many hours before the Board. This fact was taken by reporters to indicate that Dr. Bunche's security status was in serious doubt, and the statement of the head of the

Contest Winner

The announcement of the winner of The Commonweal's Thirtieth Anniversary Essay Contest along with the names of those awarded honorary mention appears on page 253 of this issue.

The winner, Mr. Joseph E. Imbriaco, is a graduating senior in political science at Notre Dame. Valedictorian of his class, he holds the highest average among this year's graduates. The award will be made to him at Class Day ceremonies at Notre Dame, part of the Commencement program.

Mr. Imbriaco, twenty-one, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Dominic Imbriaco of Elizabeth, New Jersey. A member of the board of the Notre Dame literary magazine and of the Wranglers, he will attend Harvard Law School next year on a scholarship. He remarks: "I cannot help thinking that this award is more properly a reflection on this university, on the teachers here who have shared so generously and warmly their learning with us students, and on the rich tradition of modern Catholic thinking out of which the essay grew."

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loyalty board that no such inference should be drawn did nothing to dissipate such conclusions.

Under the circumstances, friends of this country at the UN were dismayed. Dr. Bunche is widely regarded as an outstanding spokesman for the democratic cause and an anti-Communist; to see his case dragged out in this fashion has aided enemies of the United States to promote neutralism by saying this country is in the grip of hysteria. So much harm has already been done that only the most substantial and hitherto unknown information about Dr. Bunche, of a nature sufficient to bar him from any sensitive post, would have been sufficient to justify it.

In his time Dr. Bunche has probably belonged to many organizations, and some of them, for all we know, may later have turned out to be suspect. We emphasize that we do not know this as a fact; we are merely surmising, because almost anyone active in promoting interracial justice in the early thirties almost inevitably would have found Communists in the same organizations. The shame is that more non-Communists were not then active in such efforts.

We do not know all the organizations Dr. Bunche belonged to; we do know that he was a director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. As executive director of the NAACP, Walter White has already testified about that fact, and about his personal friendship with Dr. Bunche of twenty-five years standing. As a director, Bunche consistently pursued "very definite non-Communist and anti-Communist policies," Mr. White reported. This same point could, we know, be made by many others.

After the Bunche affair began to receive publicity all over the world, the loyalty board acted with commendable promptness to give him a clean bill of health. But what advantage was gained for this country by making an international scandal out of the matter? Is the United States stronger because our friends abroad have had to apologize for us and try to explain our actions away?

Everybody except the Communists agrees that security measures are necessary. But to be effective, security evaluations have to take into account all that a man stands for, the total effect of the person and his work. In the early days of the New Deal it was fashionable for the advocates of *laissez faire* to sneer that perfect security could be found only in jail. At the time that argument usually had the hollow ring of self-interest. But considered in the light of our present national sentiment on security, the aphorism may have more point.

We fail to see that the national interest is served by undoing the good work of men like Dr. Bunche. Certainly it is an odd kind of security system that rewards those who have done nothing and endangers the effectiveness of those who have made truly significant contributions to national and international welfare.

WALDEMAR GURIAN

ONE of the great contemporary authorities on totalitarianism and the Soviet Union died May 26. Dr. Waldemar Gurian, a distinguished and valued contributor to this magazine, died at the untimely age of fifty-two. He had been ill for some months; his death was the second in as many weeks among The Commonweal's regular contributors, following, as it did, the death of May 21 of Dr. Max Fischer.

Waldemar Gurian was a convert to Catholicism; he was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, and studied at the Universities of Berlin, Bonn, Cologne, Munich and Breslau. In the early thirties he published in Germany a work on Bolshevism which was remarkable in its prescience, predicting the shape of the emerging Soviet totalitarianism and the identification of the revolution with the perpetuation and enlarging of the personal power of Soviet leaders. In 1937 he published *Hitler and the Christians,* and was compelled to leave Nazi Germany. He joined the University of Notre Dame that year.

His contribution to the Notre Dame political science program was unique, as his students and colleagues through the years will testify. He was chairman of the University's Committee on International Relations and edited several of its publications, including the recent *The Catholic Church in World Affairs.* The latest of his books was *Bolshevism: An Introduction to Soviet Communism.*

He was a founder and the editor of *The Review of Politics,* a journal which intended to revive "the Aristotelian conception of politics, a sovereign conception that embraced everything, every interest, every event, every idea affecting the life of man in the human community." It was to bring to bear on modern culture the "illumination of a valid spiritual and philosophical tradition, an illumination best described perhaps as the Christian world-view." *The Review of Politics* did that and has achieved great professional prestige among American political scientists. And the idea behind that journal expressed the scope of the interests and intellect of Waldemar Gurian, and it, with his indispensable studies of totalitarianism, makes the intellectual monument to his life. His friends, colleagues and students will have their own memories of this remarkable man. May he rest in peace.

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Christianity and Democracy

"UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF THE GOSPEL AT WORK IN HISTORY, THE SECULAR CONSCIENCE HAS LEARNED THE DIGNITY OF THE PEOPLE AND OF THE COMMON MAN."

JACQUES MARITAIN

THE tragedy of the modern democracies is that they have not yet succeeded in realizing democracy. The causes of this failure are many. First, the enemies of democracy never laid down their arms, and their resentment, hatred of the people and of freedom, have only grown in proportion as the weaknesses and mistakes of the modern democracies gave them more pretexts. Finally there was a coalition made between the interests of the leader classes, corrupted by money, desperately clinging to their privileges, and crazed by a blind fear of Communism (the spread of which could have been prevented only by a clear-sighted policy of social reform), between the interests of the leader classes and the ambitions of sordid adventurers, as well as the slave philosophy taught in all the countries of Europe by utopians eager to see their ideas realized through any possible means, or by sadistic racists, drunk with the joy of using the spirit to betray the spirit. At the very time when all the artifices of intellectual intimidation were bringing this sham ideology to its greatest efficacy, the youth of the democratic countries was engaging in an examination of conscience from which it would have come forth a few years later with renewed strength. But the first effect of this was to develop doubt and hesitancy, and that youth was to finish its examination of conscience in prisons and concentration camps, and in heroic resistance to the beast trampling Europe.

Another great reason for the failure of modern democracies to realize democracy is the fact that such a realization demands necessarily to take place in the social order as well as in the political order, and that this requirement has not yet been fulfilled. The irreducible antagonisms inherent in an economy founded upon the self-propagating power of money, the selfishness of the monied classes, and the secession of the proletariat, erected by Marxism into a mystic principle of the revolution, all have kept the democratic tenets from passing into the life of the society: and the impotence of modern societies in the face of poverty and the dehumanization of work as well as their inability to overcome the exploitation of man by his fellows have been a bitter failure for them.

But the main reason is one of a spiritual nature. It resides in the inner contradiction and tragic misunderstanding of which the modern democracies have been the victims, particularly in Europe. In its essential principle, the form and ideal of democracy is inspired by the spirit of the Gospel and cannot subsist without it. In virtue of the blind logic of historical conflicts and of social memory, which has nothing to do with the logic of thought, we saw the leading forces in modern democracies repudiating both the Gospel and Christianity in the name of human liberty. On the other hand, we saw the leading forces in specifically Christian strata combatting democratic aspirations in Europe for over a century in the name of religion.

In France, the labor movement of 1848 was animated by a flame of Christian feeling, however smoky this flame may have been. The free-thinking bourgeoisie simultaneously smothered both the movement and the flame. The nineteenth century saw the consummation of the great scandal of which Pius XI spoke. The working classes were seeking their salvation in the denial of Christianity; conservative Christian circles were seeking theirs in the denial of the material foundations and temporal requirements of justice and love. Soon, throughout Europe, panic-stricken leaders were to hold up an absurdly false dilemma before their followers. They claimed that men must choose between Communism, which sought to expel God, and fascism which sought to enslave and regiment Him, to corrupt religion in souls, and to "de-Christianize the Church herself."

This state of affairs was to reveal the frightful paralysis, caused by the contradiction of which I have spoken, both in the Christian spirit and the democratic spirit in the temporal life of peoples. It also made clear the disaster brought about in modern democracies, by the divorce between the Christian and the democratic principles.

WHAT then are those thoughts and profound aspirations awakened in the depths of the conscience of peoples by the Christian message, and which have traveled underground for centuries before coming to

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light? However badly understood or distorted they may have been during their hidden journey in the secular conscience, just what are those truths of evangelical origin which the secular conscience henceforth connected and identified with the very idea of civilization?

If we seek to consider them in themselves, freeing them from any erroneous context, we shall say that, by virtue of this hidden work of evangelical inspiration, the secular conscience has understood that human history does not turn in a circle, but is directed toward a goal, and proceeds in a certain direction. Progress is not automatic and necessary, but threatened and thwarted; it is not due to an advent of pure reason which would invalidate all that was inherited from the past, but that heritage itself is what increases, groaning under the labor of all the human and divine energies in man. What has been gained for the secular or profane conscience, if it does not swing to barbarism, is faith in the onward movement of mankind.

Under evangelical inspiration, often ignored but nevertheless active, the secular conscience has understood that the human person, while being part of the state, yet transcends the state because of the inviolable mystery of his spiritual freedom, and because he is called to the attainment of goods which are absolute. The state's reason for existing is to help the human person achieve the conquest of these goods and of a life truly human. What has been gained for the secular conscience, if it does not swing to barbarism, is faith in the rights of man, as a human person, as a person engaged in social and economic life, and as a working person; and it is faith in justice as being the basis of communal life and as being an essential property of the law, which is not a law if it is unjust.

Under the inspiration of the Gospel at work in history, the secular conscience has learned the dignity of the people and of the common man. The people are not God, the people do not possess an infallible reason, the will of the people or the spirit of the people is not the rule which decides what is just or unjust. But the people are the slowly prepared and formed body of common humanity, the living patrimony of the common gifts and promises made by God to His creatures—which are deeper and more essential than all additional privileges and social differentiations—and of the like dignity and like weakness of all members of the human race. It is only by existing in the communion of the people that any effort can bear fruit, or that the inspiring leadership which the people needs, can keep both its vitality and legitimacy.

Awakened by the movement of civilization to a consciousness of himself, the common man knows that his day has dawned, provided only that he triumph over totalitarian corruption and be not devoured by it; he knows that the idea of a class or race hereditarily constituted to be the master and dominator, must make way for the idea of a community of men equal in rights and in work, and of an élite of the mind and of work which will arise out of the people, without cutting itself off from the people, and will be, so to speak, the flowering and luxury of its energies. What has been gained for the secular conscience, if it does not swing to barbarism, is the sense of the basic equality of men in nature, and of the relative equality which justice must create amongst them, in the participation of everyone, according to his capacities and deserts, in the common task, and in the common heritage of civilization.

IN virtue of the hidden work of the evangelical inspiration, the secular conscience has understood that the authority of those who govern (by the very fact that it derives from the author of human nature) is meant for free men and is exercised by virtue of the consent of the governed. For the Christian the dictates of authority bind in conscience because authority has its source in God; but from the very fact that authority has its source in God and not in man, no man or special group of men has in itself the right to command others. The leaders of the people receive that right from the principle which creates and preserves nature, and receive this right through the channels of nature itself, that is to say through the consent or will of the people or of the body of the community, through which authority always passes before it is invested in the leaders; and it is as vicars or representatives of the multitude that the holders of authority lead the multitude; and it is toward the common good of the multitude that they must lead it.

What has been gained for the secular conscience, if it does not swing to barbarism, is the conviction that authority, or the right to wield power, is held by the governments of the earthly commonwealth only because this authority manifests the common consent in them, and because they have received their trust from the people; and it is the conviction that the normal state toward which human societies must tend is a state in which the people act as an adult person, or one come of age in the political life.

In virtue of the hidden work of the evangelical inspiration, the secular conscience has learned that the political domain and the flesh and blood paraphernalia of the things that are Caesar's must nevertheless be subject to God and to justice. It has understood that all the art of dominating and all the crimes used by princes and leaders of nations to conquer and consolidate their power can indeed give them power, but always turn out for the misfortune of the peoples.

Once man has understood that in reality politics depends on morality because its end is the human good of the community, he sees at the very same moment that to want justice and law in politics is to want a great revolution which will replace the politics of power

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for the masters, men, states or nations by the politics of the common good, over which the people itself must watch, as being the main party interested. A community of free men cannot live if its spiritual foundation is not, essentially, law. Machiavellianism and the politics of domination, which consider justice and law as sure means of losing everything, are the born-enemies of a community of free men. What is gained for the secular conscience, if it does not swing to barbarism, is its condemnation of the politics of domination and of iniquitous and perverse means of ruling nations; it is the profound feeling that justice fosters order, and that injustice is the worst disorder, and that the cause of the well-being and freedom of the people and the cause of political justice are substantially connected.

Under the evangelical inspiration, often ignored, but nevertheless active, the secular conscience has awakened not only to the dignity of the human person, but also to the aspirations and the urge which are at work in the depths of man. The person, in itself a root of independence, but plunged into the constraints that come from material nature within and outside of man, tends to overcome these constraints and achieve its freedom of autonomy. When it is known that we are all created for blessedness, death no longer holds any terror; but then it is impossible to become resigned to the oppresion and enslavement of one's brother, and one aspires, for the very life of mankind on earth, to a state of emancipation in conformity with man's dignity. What has been gained for the secular conscience, if it does not swing to barbarism, is the conviction that the forward march of human societies is progress toward the conquest of a freedom conformable to the vocation of our human nature.

Finally, under the inspiration of the Gospel at work in history, the secular conscience has understood that amidst the misfortunes and sufferings of our existence, crushed as it is by the iron laws of biological and economic necessity, and by the weight of men's pride, injustice and wickedness, one single principle of liberation, one single principle of hope, one single principle of peace can stir up the mass of servitude and iniquity, and can triumph over it, because this principle descends into us from the creative source which created the world and is stronger than the world: namely that brotherly love whose law, a scandal to the mighty, was promulgated by the Gospel, and which is, as the Christian well knows, the charity of God poured out into the hearts of men.

Once the heart of man has felt the sweetness of this awesome hope, it is troubled for all time. The human race was exalted by this hope, and can lose it only by becoming more fierce than before. This hope is holy in itself. It answers the deepest, most solidly rooted desires of human nature. It places souls in a communion of suffering and impatience with all who are oppressed and persecuted. It calls for heroism. It has a divine power for transforming human history. What has been gained for the secular conscience, if it does not swing to barbarism, is faith in the brotherhood of man, a sense of that social duty which demands compassion for man in the person of the weak and the suffering, and the conviction that the political task par excellence is that of rendering common life better and more fraternal, and of working to make the structure of laws, customs and institutions of this common life into a house for brothers.

IT is in its radical opposition to the philosophy of enslavement, in other words, to the totalitarian philosophy, that the democratic philosophy of man and society most clearly reveals its essential characteristics. Though personally involved in the traditions of the great landowners who possessed slaves, Thomas Jefferson sought to abolish slavery as a general practice. And this condemnation of slavery is at the very heart of democratic philosophy. This philosophy can be recognized in the traits to which I alluded a while ago; inalienable rights of the person; equality; political rights of the people whose consent is implied in any political regime, and as vicars of whom the leaders govern; absolute primacy of those relationships of justice and law at the basis of society; an ideal, not of war, prestige or power, but of improvement and emancipation of human life, and of brotherhood.

For that philosophy, the political task par excellence is one of civilization and culture. It tends primarily to bring about the common good of the multitude, in such a way that the concrete person, and not merely a privileged class, but the whole mass of the population, will really accede to the measure of independence suitable to civilized life, and which is ensured at the same time by the economic guarantees of work and property, by political rights, by civic virtues and the cultivation of the mind. Democratic philosophy does not admit that the state is a transcendent power which gathers up within itself every authority and imposes it from above onto human life; it demands that autonomous organs, enjoying an authority proportionate with their functions, spontaneously emanate from the civic community and the tension that exists between its various activities; and that the state be merely the highest organ of regulation, the object of which is the common good taken in what concerns the whole as a whole.

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After that shall we make a point of defining the form of government to which the principles of the democratic political philosophy naturally tend? This philosophy maintains that the human person as such is called to participate in political life and that the political rights of a community of free men must be solidly guaranteed. That is why it claims the right of suffrage for every adult citizen of whatever race or social condition and likewise demands that a juridically formulated constitution establish the fundamental laws of the regime to which the people have expressly decided to submit their political life. The principles of the democratic philosophy of man and society can be satisfied by a constitutional form of monarchy or oligarchy, but it is toward the republican form that they tend, as being their most natural expression: a form of government in which the legislative power must be exercised by the representatives of the people, and the executive power by delegates directly or indirectly designated by the people and supervised by the people.

ACCORDING to a familiar formula, democracy is described as the sovereignty of the people. This expression is ambiguous, for, in truth, there is no sovereign or absolute master in a democracy. It would be better to say that democracy is that regime in which the people enjoy social and political majority, and use it to direct their own affairs, or again that it is the "government of the people, by the people and for the people," which means that the people are then governed by men they themselves designated for functions of a determined type and duration, and over whose management they retain specific control by means primarily of their representatives and assemblies.

The error of individualistic liberalism has been, in principle, to deny the elected officers of the people any real right to command, under the pretext that everyone should obey only himself. These elected officers then became the holders of power without real authority, and at the very moment when they were governing the people, they had to make the people believe that they were merely its passive tools. In reality the elected officers receive their trust from the people and must govern in conjunction with the people, but, within the limits of their functions, they are invested with real authority. They enjoy a real right to be obeyed. In emphasizing this point, I wonder whether I am not departing from some ideological tendencies of Jefferson, who sometimes seemed to distrust the very idea of government; but I am sure I am not departing from his practical conviction as a statesman.

Another error of Rousseau's political philosophy and of subsequent pseudo-individualism was that of reducing the community to a myriad of individuals in the face of an all-powerful state in which the individual will is supposed to be annihilated in order to be mystically reborn in the form of a general will; of excluding the existence and autonomy, initiative and rights proper to any group or community of a rank inferior to that of the state, and, finally, of suppressing the very notion of common good and common task. These errors which corresponded to the rise of the bourgeois class and ideology, far from being closely linked with democracy are destructive to democracy. They paved the way for totalitarianism. In freeing itself from them, democracy will return to the authentic principles of democratic philosophy.

DEMOCRACY must not only proclaim in a more or less symbolic manner, but foster in reality, and be really animated by, trust in the people, in the plain people. Such trust does not proceed from the rationalistic and romanticist optimism which prevailed at the end of the eighteenth century. It proceeds from a realistic and sober appreciation of the aims and conditions of political life. One of the distinctive features of American civilization is that, despite the power in fact enjoyed by the groups of men or of families which control economic life, these groups do not constitute a class in the European sense, that is to say, deep-rooted in history, hereditarily stable and possessing a powerful moral and social cohesion. Because, in coming over to this country and leaving the Old World, men also leave the past, and, so to speak, blot out the nightmare of history; they doubtless get rid of a treasure of historical experience, but they also get rid of the poisonous resentments, hatreds, rivalries and prejudices conveyed by the century-old history of social groups and nations.

The considerations I have just laid down proceed from another conception of Christianity than Jefferson's. Yet I believe that taken in themselves these considerations are in agreement with his political philosophy. I am not pretending that they give a complete picture of all the particular features of this philosophy —far from it! But I believe that they correspond to its basic principles and to the lasting substance it conveys to us. And in this very fact I find a stimulating lesson— I mean a proof that the genuine democratic philosophy of man and society, which is a fruit and achievement of our Judeo-Christian civilization, can agree on its basic statements as well as cooperate in the common task, men sharing in quite different religious inspirations, from the most orthodox forms of Christianity to the merely natural outlook of those "ethical culture societies" of which Thomas Jefferson, as Professor Francis Philbrick put it, would almost certainly have been a member today.

(This article by M. Maritain is reprinted from the May 7, 1943 issue of The Commonweal.)

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Not the Philosopher But the Man

"I CANNOT REFRAIN FROM SAYING THAT
I PREFER THE MAN TO ALL HIS BOOKS."

JEAN C. DE MENASCE

I THINK that Jacques Maritain had all it takes to become a neurotic; but it was not so much the certainty of faith as the almost actual experiences of the love of God which gave him his delightful certainty of being loved, of being valued, of being known and understood, and in turn gave him such poise that even a psychiatric beagle would be incapable of finding in him the slightest hint of neurosis. It would be useless to look for traces of fear in Maritain, or of compensation, or of possessiveness. He is the only person I have ever known who has been psycho-therapeutized by the Presence of God, Which in him has simply awakened all the springs of life.

Although I am not the Congregration of Rites, I count Maritain as a saint. But his sanctity is by no means monastic or priest-like and I cannot imagine him as either priest or monk. It strikes me that the reason for this must be that I have never known another man more in love with a woman than he.

I think it must be his love for Raissa which makes all of us who are his friends almost bear her a grudge; unwillingly, we think of Maritain as of a kind of priest of the mind, a consecrated hen who lays golden eggbooks, and seeing him in love with a woman, like a troubadour or school-boy, puts us out. The way God and Raissa manage not to divide this man also strikes me as an unquestionable but inexplicable fact.

I do appreciate Maritain's intelligence, the perfect balance of his speculative capacities, deductive and inductive, but if I had to say why I really love the man, I should be obliged to say that it is not the philosopher in him I care for, but the Quixote. I think the first impetus of his soul moves him towards the lost cause, towards the under-dog; and I think that for him the greatest act of heroism and objectivity is the readiness to take part in a victory and help the winner when, after all, the strongest side happens to be in the right. His heart beats for the vanquished, but he does not succumb to the neurosis of the victims, and he knows that some of the vanquished may be in the wrong.

Now there is nothing at all of the college professor about Maritain, none of that cocksure, *ex-cathedra* air; nor does he in the least resemble an ambassador, or an ex-ambassador. In a word, there is nothing important or official about him. Thousands of little men give an impression of authority and importance, of rightfully occupying the seat behind their desk. Maritain on the contrary has something of the beggar about him, but the kind of a beggar that we shall never meet, supremely free and serviceable.

Without being sacrilegious, I should like to remark that I cannot ever think of God or of Our Lord as VIP's. The Vicar-General of the Diocese, the policeman on his beat, the Director of the Immigrants' Office are all Very Important Persons. In no way does Maritain fall into this category.

Besides his quixotic and "unimportant" air, Maritain also wins hearts because he is a man who impresses one as being helpless. No defense has been built up around him. He is entirely vulnerable, and the only protection set up between him and those who would like to exploit him are his wife and his sister-in-law, who try to tell you over the telephone that he isn't at home. But when you have successfully overcome this obstacle, he is ready to leave the book he is working on in order to devote himself to some charitable job which would disgust a first-year student of the School for Social Service.

He doesn't consider anything of his own precious.

WHEN Saint Augustine writes, he loves to issue challenges right and left: "Let the Dositheans come forth; let the Manichaean answer, if he can; let the Pelagian repeat his assertion . . ." In the same way many theologians seem to love the truth not so much for its own sake as for the joy of hitting out right and left. They talk of the Trinity, the principle of finality, or the mystery of being, but they seem to get their greatest satisfaction in challenging modern heretics one after the other.

Maritain is never quarrelsome. He is so happy to think of real things, that whenever he has to wage a controversy with someone, he gives the impression that he is doing it reluctantly. Moreover, his way of pro-

Monsignor de Menasce, who was a pastor in Washington, D.C., during the war years, is now assigned to special duty in Rome.

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ceeding is diametrically opposed to ordinary dialectical tactics.

Some people indulge in contact with reality for as little time as possible, and then unfold their proofs almost indifferently as far as the content is concerned. I know an apologist who, as soon as he had analyzed Papal infallibility, pursued his religious teaching without paying the slightest attention to the intimate significance of the various dogmas, insisting only on preserving logical coherence with the infallibility of the Church.

Maritain's thought is just the opposite: the proportion between his formal proofs and descriptions of internal coherence, is all in favor of the content. No doubt sometimes, when his dialectical mechanism works, he enjoys that same exquisite pleasure that can be had from listening to a fugue of Bach's; but as a rule he prefers to be a man who dips into reality rather than a devotee of systematic logic.

If I were to attempt to classify in one way or another my friendship with Maritain, I should experience a certain difficulty. In my feelings towards him there is certainly a filial element, but I would not go so far as to say that our friendship comes under the category of a father-and-son relationship. Undoubtedly in our relations there is something of the disciple and the "magister," and Maritain's influence on my intellectual life is such that even my handwriting, which has a tendency to be a scribble, now reflects some of the exquisite order and limpidity of his own. Our friendship does not come under the teacher-student category for the reason too that I bear a heavy dose of antagonism for any teacher, and this would prevent a friendship from getting under way.

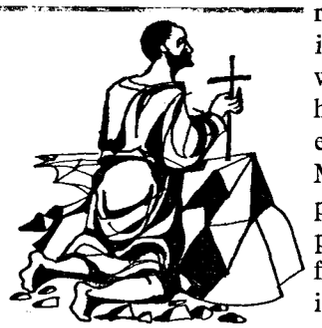
Of course our friendship is not at all like the friendship that binds me to so many of my colleagues, former school friends and working companions, with whom comradeship has gradually deepened into the level of friendly exchanges. So where *am* I to place our friendship?

Here I would like to give two examples: one by way of opposition, the other in order to show some analogies.

When you are in a room with a gravely neurotic person who is considerably upset, even if this person does not talk, the presence of his trouble, of his unrest and fears, creates a kind of backwash which drags you too into the other person's world of distress and terror.

When, on the contrary, your dog is in the room with you, his tranquil acceptance of existence seems to instill tranquillity in you too. As for the affection he has for you, you feel that it isn't explained by your social position, intelligence or capacity to be witty or dialectical; the link between a dog and such a real "you" as is unknown even to yourself creates in you a sense of peace and tranquillity.

Maritain's presence in my life has something in it that resembles the friendship which binds me to my dog. He is like a focus of peacefulness, of quiet approval of life and of himself, and his peace, which is not competitive and is void of unrestfulness, makes itself felt in an inverse way to that in which the neurotic instills his own restlessness in others. But most of all, with Maritain we have the impression of being loved in a part of ourselves so profound and so secret that it is hidden from almost everyone else and even from ourselves.



I trust my friend will not be hurt by being analogically a dog in my life. I might also say, if I were not afraid of being misinterpreted, that our friendship has in it something that is more like a bond of charity than a tie of comradeship.

A FEW years ago I spent an evening in a fashionable drawing-room, where Maritain too was present. Among the guests was a very lovely girl who was playing cat-and-mouse with a poet who was in love with her. There were also there a sparkling professor and a lady who had had many successive husbands and many concomitant lovers and who as a rule liked to talk about religious subjects.

Towards the beginning of the evening, everybody ran rapidly along the tracks of his own life and his own ideas. The college professor was like a conjurer for whom Hegel, Marx and Sartre were so many oranges. He became in turn a display of fireworks, a wizard who made things disappear and reappear, and he occupied the whole stage. The cat-girl also seemed to fill the whole stage, as she pulled the strings and maneuvered the three or four young men present.

Maritain seemed to occupy a very tiny place in that salon; he exchanged a few words with one of the unimportant guests and gave the appearance during the whole evening of never having left his corner. However, as the evening drew to its close, the college professor interrupted his spells and started to talk to one of the other guests. He seemed sufficiently at ease to converse quietly, and his conversation gradually got around to simple personal topics: he would have liked to marry Miss Z, but he felt he was too ugly and his origins too plebeian to aspire to her hand. He had never said anything of this kind before, and now, as he talked, he no longer took refuge in the intellectualistic display of trapeze-artistry.

The lovely-cruel-cat had stopped playing and exciting the three or four men against each other.

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The lady of many husbands, instead of discussing Indian mysticism with me, told me about an elder sister of hers who had monopolized all their father's affections.

Towards midnight, Maritain took leave and someone asked the master of the house: "Who is that delightful, timid Frenchman, so utterly *effacé?*"

One by one the guests went home, telling their host that rarely, during these last years, had they spent an evening during which they had felt so rested and at ease.

Maritain does give one the feeling of being entirely at one's ease, but now I should like to say, without conveying a different impression, something that might at first blush seem to contradict that; in reality it confirms it.

Few people give the impression of deep melancholy and wistfulness that Maritain suggests. In his company you feel that you are near someone who has seen a sight of such beauty that he can no longer regain his equilibrium, or rather you feel as though you were with a lover who has been abandoned but not betrayed.

It is this quiet, melancholic wistfulness that distinguishes him from so many of the Catholic activists and propagandists I know, who seem to be overflowing with the joy of life and energy and brimming with organizing ardor. In our world of grown-ups, they appear like kindergarten ma'ams clapping their hands in the midst of the children and good-naturedly, efficiently organizing minuets, ring-around-the-rosies and other academic acrobatics. The worthy activist seems to be saying all the time: "Jesus died for us, we must show ourselves cheerful."

Maritain, in contrast, is like the exile or rather he *is* the exile who carefully avoids playing the exile.

I should now like to observe that far more than debating with Maritain (every time you talk to him you get the impression not that he is so very intelligent but that you are very intelligent), far more than admiring him for his utterly free spirit and audacity, we get the desire to take advantage of his presence, not only of his intellectual but also of his physical presence.

When you are with a little child, almost inevitably you want to pinch it on the cheek or its fat little legs: there is a certain healthy freshness about a child which calls for some kind of physical contact. You have to pinch a little child; you have to have a pine-needle in your mouth when you walk through a pine woods; and so I have to confess that I feel an even greater joy when I pinch Maritain's cheek than when I read *Integral Humanism* or *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. And yet God knows how my intelligence and my sensitivity have grown after reading those books.

I don't know if I am paying a compliment to Maritain or not, but I cannot refrain from saying that I prefer him to all his books.

LET me now add a few touches to the Aristotelian definition of the magnanimous man.

I should say that Maritain is a man who has nothing in the shop window. His merchandise is not on display; but in him there isn't any dissimulation, there are no hiding-places, no secret drawers, no window-dressing or mystery. He is neither the problem-man nor the man-of-mystery. In him there is simply something transparent and invisible.

In our spiritual ascents, we are like characters of Jules Verne's, who throw out of their balloon the corpse of a dog; but this corpse is no longer subject to the laws of gravity, and keeps on accompanying the explorer during the whole ascent.

We are all of us followed through life by a procession of cadaveric egos, of egos from which we endeavor to desolidarize ourselves but without ever wholly succeeding. In Maritain's ascent, there are no accompanying corpses. The magnanimous man, Aristotle observes, is a little awkward. Undoubtedly Maritain is somewhat timid and awkward, but he has a kind of elegance which is not the elegance of the "gentleman of distinction" of whiskey advertisements. Maritain does not fling himself into danger, he is not a 'casse-cou,' he is not even attracted, like the Irish, by a "good fight." He is certainly not quarrelsome or militant, and yet fear is not present in him and he has never refused to open hostilities against all those whom his intelligence or his heart indicated as perverse or corrupting.

If he were a widower, or a bachelor, I do not think Maritain would be greatly upset by the various attacks aimed at him by the theological or political odium, of which he has regularly been the object. It is Raissa who makes him particularly vulnerable. But we must also note that what makes him invulnerable to the others is not a coat-of-mail of contempt or of indifference to the judgments of others, but rather the respect for others which induces him to attach a due importance to no matter what judgment.

Naturally he does not water with meticulous narcissism the little plant of his ego in its pot; I would rather compare him to a man looking out of a window, for whom the transparency of the pane is insufficient: the window must be open. With a closed window his eyes would be satisfied, but only if the window is open do his lungs breathe the air. He is not an intellectualist: his intelligence wants to know, but his lungs want to breathe.

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From his books we learn what Maritain loves, in spite of the fact that we discern a modesty which prohibits any attempt at confession; by means of them we can learn to know all that he loves and *how* he loves.

He has never told us what he cannot stand.

I suspect that the only people who get on his nerves are the self-complacent stiffs, the Pharisees of the law or of sensitivity, who transform their ego into what they have done or not done, suffered or realized, and offer themselves as a paradigm and measure of life.

MARITAIN—THE PHILOSOPHER

The Defender of Human Intelligence

"A LIVING INSTANCE OF HOW THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER SHOULD USE KEYS TO OPEN DOORS AND NOT TO SHUT THEM."

JAMES COLLINS

WHEN Cardinal Spellman provided a fund for a medal to be awarded to outstanding Catholic philosophers, there was no difficulty about making the choice of the first recipient. The Executive Council of the American Catholic Philosophical Association voted unanimously to confer this honor upon Jacques Maritain. Accordingly, the Cardinal Spellman-Aquinas medal was presented to him at the Easter, 1951, meeting of the Association. As it happened, this meeting was also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Association itself. There was a symbolic fitness about this double celebration, since the Catholic philosophers of America were doing no more than acknowledging their enduring debt to Maritain for philosophical instruction and personal inspiration.

It is difficult to calculate the depth and extent of Maritain's impact upon American thought. Our way of thinking and its Thomistic orientation have been decisively shaped both by his personal presence in America and by the steady stream of English translations of his books. It is largely through this influence that we have come to see the philosophy of Saint Thomas not as a dead and deadening set of theses in some Latin manual but as a living and contemporary grasp upon the real.

Since 1933, Maritain has been associated academically with such leading American institutions as the Mediaeval Institute in Toronto, Columbia and Princeton Universities, and more recently with Notre Dame and Chicago. His presence and his counsel have never been confined to Catholic circles but, like the impulse of charity, have reached out into every corner of our land where inquiring and earnest minds are found. From his early books on *Art and Scholasticism* and *The Angelic Doctor* down to his most recent publications on *Creative Intuition* and *Man and the State,* Maritain has arrested the attention of American readers of all faiths and philosophical positions. This universal appeal is not due to any trick of style or any sort of philosophical compromise. It stems directly from Maritain's infectious devotion to the pursuit of truth and his solid respect for human persons and their convictions.

AT international congresses of philosophy held in Europe during the postwar years, the remark was often made that more American Catholics are Thomists than any other comparable national group. European scholars were constantly surprised that our adherence to Saint Thomas is much stronger than a conventional bow and that our knowledge of his teaching is grounded so firmly in a study of his texts. These striking traits are due principally to the pioneer labors of Maritain and his friend, Etienne Gilson. They have encouraged a direct and friendly acquaintance with Aquinas himself, so that philosophical energy will not be dissipated in the morass of second-hand summaries and second-rate schools. The tremendous demand of American readers for translations of Saint Thomas has not been satisfied by the Random House edition of the Basic Writings and the smaller Modern Library edition. It is likely that reliable translations of Saint Thomas will soon invade even the paperback field.

Coming directly to grips with Saint Thomas is not so much a matter of leaving Maritain behind as it is of joining forces with him in a common pursuit of wisdom. Yet he lays down certain quite stringent conditions for those who genuinely wish to march along in his company. Since these conditions have not always been satisfied by the present generation of American Thomists, Maritain's role in our midst remains that of an intellectual gadfly, a disquieting conscience. He quickly disabuses us of the fond conviction that all is well in the republic of thought and that no major philosophical developments are needed.

For one thing, he raises the discomforting question about the quality and integrity of our adherence to Saint

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Thomas. If we do not base this attachment upon a conviction that the Thomistic vision of being in its existential richness is a truer and more comprehensive philosophical account, we are mixing motives and failing as philosophers. At a time when despair of philosophical speculation is fashionable with even some Catholic thinkers, it is important to accept the challenge of Maritain's defense of human intelligence and its capacity for grasping being. His confidence in the vocation of Christian reason to develop a distinctive philosophical wisdom is not a sentimental persuasion. It has the strong backing of all his own efforts in this direction during the past forty years.

Another provocative stand taken by Maritain is this:

> Thomism is not a guard-rail built in order to keep within the limits of prudence a search in which Christian Reason makes itself tributary to any kind of philosophical fashion. Thomism is the arsenal of Christian Reason—and of simple natural reason—in its very labor of search and and its effort to conquer new territories. The keys prepared by the Angelic Doctor have been prepared to open the doors, not to shut them.

The Christian philosopher cannot turn his back upon natural reason or withdraw into some isolated and static dream world of his own. He must face the new problems of his own world and maintain an attitude of openness before the findings of other workers. This is a risky business. It has involved Maritain in many disputes. But it is also the only way to keep Thomism alive and permanently relevant to the generation for which we are responsible. What makes Maritain almost unique is his courageous readiness to set out on uncharted seas, whenever the contemporary situation calls for it, and to confront the permanent principles of being and knowing with the data and problems of our times. In the freshness of his outlook and the intrepidity of his researches, he provides a living instance of how the Christian philosopher should use keys to open doors and not to shut them.

MARITAIN has blazed new philosophical trails in many directions, some of which have not yet been given further exploration by American thinkers. Some of his essays on the nature of signs and symbols, the meaning and weakness of logical positivism, and the natural experience of the ontological world, contain fertile hints about problems which are very much in the forefront of American philosophical discussion but which have not been followed through by Catholic philosophers. For instance, the basic means for evaluation of the popular efforts of Professor W. T. Stace to combine Western naturalism with European mysticism are to be found in some of Maritain's analyses of mystical experience and the natural awareness of the nought. To the extent that we have not yet pursued these leads in greater detail, we are still ignorant of the real value of Maritain's contribution to the philosophical and religious life in America. He has always expressed the highest regard for the capacities of the American mind to grow along religious and contemplative lines. This is in striking contrast with the conventional charge of activism and anti-intellectualism with which Europeans often dismiss American efforts in the philosophical and religious fields. While not unaware of the dangers, Maritain has characteristically sought to encourage the constructive potentialities in America by integrating them within a context of Christian wisdom and sound natural reason.

Maritain's basic work, *The Degrees of Knowledge,* has had a second career of its own in our country. Two definite repercussions of the doctrine contained in this book are detectable in present philosophical tendencies. One of these consequences is a negative one, and the other is more positive. Maritain stressed not only the degrees of knowledge but also the plurality of methods required to obtain knowledge at the various levels. This emphasis upon the pluralism of methods has worked a deepgoing revolution in the intellectual climate of American philosophy, which used to be dominated by naturalism. The unchallenged postulate of naturalism was that there is only one single scientific method and that anything unverifiable by this unique method cannot be a piece of knowledge. Maritain's analysis of the different attitudes of mind and the new methods required for dealing with further reaches of being finally broke down this naturalist assumption. At present, naturalism is on the defensive both in philosophy and in educational theory. It fails to measure up to the rich variety of human ways of knowing and learning.

The positive consequence of Maritain's work in the theory of knowledge is a growing respect for realism. Here again, it is impossible to deal entirely separately with Maritain, apart from the contributions of his colleague, Gilson. Working along distinctive paths, they have nevertheless cooperated in rehabilitating the realistic view of knowledge. They have both emphasized the importance of the existential judgment and the manner in which the human intellect becomes one with the real existing thing. And because knowing is regulated fundamentally by the principles of being, found in the thing known, the theory of knowledge is now being restored to its rightful place as an integral portion of a realistic metaphysics. A quarter-century ago, the requiem had already been said for metaphysics, but the metaphysics that departed this earth was a purely idealistic construction. Maritain had the audacity to remind us about the hunger of the human intelligence for being and about our inextinguishable need for a metaphysics of the real. The quickening of American interest in a realistic theory of knowledge and metaphysics is apparent in the lively writings of Professor Henry Veatch of Indiana

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University and Professor John Wild of Harvard University. At meetings of the Metaphysical Society and other philosophical organizations, the realistic doctrine is marked out by its critical vigor and constructive powers.

Another field where Maritain has made a deep imprint on American thinking is the philosophy of nature. Here, he has made a simple but illuminating distinction between a philosophy of science (which deals with the logic of scientific method and knowledge) and a philosophy of nature (which makes a realistic study of changing natural being itself). In line with the revival of realism in metaphysics, there is an opportunity to develop a philosophy of nature which is something more than a reflection upon the methods of the sciences. Precisely where such a philosophy of nature would fit into the philosophical curriculum and what its content would be, are matters of keen and invigorating dispute among the younger American philosophers today. Many of them are employing Maritain's pivotal contrast between empiriological physics and ontological physics. The former is physical science in the ordinary modern sense and is ordered to explanations in terms of quantitative measurement. Ontological physics is the traditional philosophy of nature, which is orientated formally toward the principles of material, changing being. An outstanding book like Vincent Smith's *Philosophical Physics* acknowledges a profound debt to Maritain in this respect and illustrates one way of facing the problems raised by physical science. Even those who disagree with this view of philosophy of nature owe a good deal to Maritain's stimulating distinction and his original analyses of modern mathematical and physical theories.

WE are specially fortunate that Maritain's mature consideration of social and political questions should coincide with the years of his American stay. For he has shown us how the Christian philosopher cannot evade the issues of current history, even when they belong to a region where precedent is lacking and complete certainty is not at hand.

On such passion-ridden questions as the Spanish civil war, anti-Semitism, the invasion of France, atheistic Communism, and humanistic education, Maritain has stated his position lucidly and often at great personal cost. He has also moved ahead in the philosophical study of such central notions as race, nation, state, and government. These pioneer analyses in political philosophy, culminating in *Man and the State*, have issued in a profound criticism of the modern theory of sovereignty and an even more deep-rooted respect for democracy. At present, Maritain is bearing the brunt of the attack of those American writers whose thesis is that there can be no reconciliation between the Catholic Church and democracy. His own patient distinction between political absolutism and a humane political ordering of human

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individuals and goods in democratic society indicates the weakness of this thesis. His influence in the sphere of political concepts is felt in the historical researches of Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., and the systematic studies of Yves Simon.

Finally, Maritain occupies a lofty but lonely prominence in esthetics. Catholic thinkers have done little to exploit his suggestions about art, beauty and poetic experience. Literary people rather than philosophers have responded most warmly in these matters. Original work in esthetics requires a depth of culture and a training of sensibility which are often not provided by American Catholic liberal education. This is also a field where not much guidance can be gained from the medieval texts. In any case, one has only to read a few pages of *Creative Intuition* to realize that, for all our public recognition of him, we do not yet fully know the extent of the treasures of Christian wisdom which Jacques Maritain has brought to our country. There are some unexpected surprises and delights to be gained from marching along in his company.

THE SCREEN

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

KNOWING that "The Unconquered" was a documentary film about Helen Keller, I approached its preview with some curiosity (as to how its subject would be handled) and with a great deal of hesitation (because I was sure the movie would be a straight propaganda job). My doubts were completely conquered by "The Unconquered." The film is so inspiring—in the best sense of the word—and presents one of the great women of our times with such good taste and exciting drama that I was held spellbound. Everyone connected with the movie, from Nancy Hamilton (who deserves credit for the idea and served as producer) right down the line merits applause for bringing us this richly rewarding documentary.

The first part of "The Unconquered" consists mostly of photographs. Thank goodness no actress was hired to play the role of this girl who was born "normal" in 1880 and had an illness in her second year that left her blind and deaf. Accompanying these photographs, showing Helen and her family and Annie Sullivan, who taught her that there was a world of sight and sound, and along with many of the live-action sequences in which Miss Keller appears, is a commentary, nicely written by James Shute and beautifully read by Katharine Cornell. Helen's progress in learning was phenomenal; and in 1904 she graduated from Radcliffe *cum laude*. Fortunately the makers of "The Unconquered" were able to get the one Hollywood film Miss Keller was in years ago and some of the old newsreels in which she appeared.

When Miss Keller speaks from time to time during the movie, you find her quite difficult to understand, but who dares to pity a courageous spirit who unselfishly says, "It is not blindness or deafness that bring my greatest disappointments—but inability to speak well." One can have only admiration for this woman.

ALTHOUGH not as emotionally stirring as "The Unconquered," another new documentary that successfully dramatizes man's willingness to work hard for something he believes in is "The Stratford Adventure." Made by the National Film Board of Canada, under Producer Guy Clover and Director Morten Parker, this forty-minute movie recounts the adventures of a group of citizens in Stratford, Canada (pop. 19,000) in producing the Shakespearean Festival last summer.

This sounds rather unlikely as the subject matter of a film, but Director Parker has handled the material in such a lively fashion and he has used his cast so intelligently (all of whom play themselves, of course, including the man who had the idea, Tom Patterson, as well as such fancy English imports as Director Tyrone Guthrie and Actor Alec Guinness) that the picture is a stimulating treat in the art of film making as well as a fascinating study of a community theater project.

YOUR trip to Greece in "The Barefoot Battalion" may not be very pretty but it is extremely thoughtful. This Greek film starts in Salonika in 1953 and consists mostly of a long flashback to ten years earlier during the German occupation. Its story (by Nico Katsiotes, who also wrote the screenplay) is mainly about the children—hungry, homeless boys and a few girls—who were left to their own resources by the Germans and who used to fight each other for lemon peels and other garbage but finally returned to work together against their enemies: hunger, cold and the Germans. These kids formed the Barefoot Battalion which stole food and other things and distributed its goods and profits to those who were less able to get around and outsmart the occupying troops.

Obviously "The Barefoot Battalion" is pretty grim stuff but Director Gregg Tallas handles well his large cast (only a few of whom are professionals) and lets his camera capture the spirit of the locale as well as the tensions of a people who are suffering under a harsh enemy's rule. Greek movies are so seldom seen on U.S. screens that this movie would deserve attention on that score alone, if for no other reason. In the case of "The Barefoot Battalion," however, we have a movie that is well able to stand on its own merits.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Last Hope for the Redemption of Africa

THE HEART OF AFRICA. By Alexander Campbell. Knopf. $5.

By DANIEL M. FRIEDENBERG

IT is a frightful thing to be judged by what one claims to believe; for judgment even deprives the condemned of the bitter sweets of righteousness. Alexander Campbell's *The Heart of Africa* is the latest in a series of serious African studies painting a dirgeful tale of the white man on trial because of the remorseless boomerang of his own spiritual teachings.

When the early Romans colonized the world, they paid no attention to the folderol of ideas. The strong ruled and the weak submitted. The enemy, like Carthage, was either exterminated or allowed on sufferance of tribute. The system was as strong as its rapacious founders; as Cato the Elder clearly foresaw, once the Romans became infected by spiritual and egalitarian ideas, it was doomed to collapse.

The modern European colonialist, however, came to Africa at a time when he already had accepted the notion of the spiritual brotherhood of man; the insistence on a master-slave relation between white and black, therefore, was a fundamental paradox which his superior weapons and more complex cultural pattern could only temporarily obscure but not obliterate: a paradox which was bound to burst its bonds since the fault lay in himself and not the dominated.

The problem for the white man today, of universal import but reaching the crisis point in Africa, is that he is forced to face the implications of his own spiritual teachings. Neanderthal man and Superman have one thing in common; they are released from the bondage of the ethical. But Western man, since Aristotle, has a set of spiritual ground rules which create an eternal conflict between his interest and his ethic.

The reason the problem is most intensified in black Africa is due to the epic clarity of the conflict. In the white lands, cultural hypocrisy has become so ingrained, it tends to cloak over fatal contradictions: the separation of ethical from economic conduct; that of theological equality with racial and national discriminations. The African Negro, coming from an alien culture pattern, sees clearly these contradictions. The result is that the European is now in the cosmically whimsical position of being forced into decline by spirits released from the Pandora's box of his own values. As Mr. Campbell says in his summing-up chapter, where he at last makes some effort to escape the galloping journalese virus that Henry Luce's writers must imbibe: "The whites who live in Africa are suffering from a crisis of conscience. Everything the black man asks is based on what they taught him was right: Christianity, democracy, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. The whites feed themselves on illusions about the black man: that he is an unteachable savage, that he is a child, that he does not like change, that he ought to 'develop along his own lines.' But in their hearts they do not really believe any of this themselves. And they are afraid."

It is noteworthy that almost every penetrating analysis of Africa today —and, in spite of Mr. Campbell's almost petulant pragmatism, his book deserves inclusion in this class —is pessimistic in tone. There is good reason for this. The myth of white man's justice and superior rationale has been buried on the pyre of his own strife. Even African witchcraft seems obscurely benevolent in comparison with the actions of a white continent which has just exterminated millions of human beings on the sole basis of a primitive blood taboo. If white men will do this to other white men in lust of dominion, of what are they not capable if the black starts to challenge their monopoly hold? The evidence seems to maintain that Western spiritual values are bankrupt and all that remains is colossal greed, acquisitiveness gone mad. And, standing in the wings, smirking and watching the drama with cool patience is an aggressively honest and completely materialist philosophy.

The force of American public opinion is the last hope for redeeming Africa. While time is with us, if time there be, we must attempt some bridge to link the disastrous conflict between European cupidity and African nascence. Lost in the miasma of competing doctrines, we must affirm simple definitions. If we may consider our happiness as well-being, a balance of material and spiritual goods, it should be our desire to be just in relation to others, or minimally unjust, because we can hardly be happy with the acquisition of material goods at the expense of those of the spirit. Our problem, then, is that expediency may demand, in line with our material interests, what we consider unjust acts considering that our morals have universal scope. The only hope to escape this dilemma is to act vigorously on a policy which most benefits our material goods and least damages our spiritual goods; i.e., one which will be minimally unjust. What this amounts to, in practicality, is the support of all indigenous African movements which do not represent a threat to our national way of life. This implies a far more radical decision than may seem on the surface because it runs contrary to the vested interests of many of our allies. Yet this is perhaps the *only* hope left in the deteriorating African situation. When the United States promoted the Monroe Doctrine, screams resounded through all the classical halls of Europe; but as a result, Latin America today, with all of its defects, is striving to find a way of life mirroring its own spirit without threatening the world. If the United States had taken as vigorous a position in 1946 in the Indochinese situation as she did in Dutch Indonesia, the pattern of Asian events might be far different today. History, like an old-fashioned Morality Play, is simply capering

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its moral tale in Africa, and unless the American people take heed, Mau Mau, the Moslem Brotherhood and the Soviet juggernaut will join hands in one of these gruesome witches' sabbath dances and whirl with relish around our own dead hopes. "For Africa," Mr. Campbell concludes, ". . . could be the great test for Christianity, which proclaims that in the last resort all men, whatever their color, their creed, or their race, are brothers."

Old Clem

AS IT HAPPENED: The Autobiography of Clement R. Attlee. Viking. $5.

By M. A. FITZSIMONS

THIS autobiography of the leader of Britain's Labor Party presents with deceptive clarity the accepted and familiar public personality of Clement Attlee. Here is the quiet man, whose apparently unformidable qualities help to disarm his political enemies and Party rivals. His speech and writing scrupulously avoid all flights of fancy and even an occasional winged word. This, again, has become an advantage, for the commonplaces and truisms eventually cause all but the most wary to relax their guard.

The New Statesman and Nation, never short of unhelpful advice, patronizingly absolved him of the responsibility for lacking glamor. Churchill, who should have known better, called him a sheep in sheep's clothing. The projection is helpful even in time of trouble. Thus, when in 1947 the Labor Government had to deal with an acute fuel shortage, the Attlee jokes were not sharply hostile: "We would not have these troubles if old Clem Attlee were alive."

Against these points it may be recalled that Attlee has led the Labor Party for nearly twenty years, was Prime Minister for six troubled years and led his Party through two victorious elections. He has held off the onslaughts of Churchill and survived a number of left-wing rebellions. He has these latter in mind when in another connection he refers to a few of the Party's intelligentsia "who can be trusted to take the wrong view on any subject." Here, then, is strikingly successful leadership, which make the autobiography worthy of attention.

But the volume gives no certain answer to the Attlee riddle. Is he actually an enigma hidden behind the relatively colorless personality imposed by a powerful will? Is he a supreme paradox, the absolutely "sound" English socialist, a kind of Labor Stanley Baldwin, mercifully for his country without Baldwin's laziness?

His socialism originated not in rebellion against society, not in personal maladjustment, but in a conservative, upper-class desire to help other members of society. True, he had unambitiously prepared for the law but being spared the goad of dire necessity he drifted from the law to settlement house work. His experience of the misery of the people of Stepney led him to embrace socialism and its comradeship of protest. His socialism is, first of all, a protest against inequity and needless suffering. The moral emphasis has been an unmistakably consistent note in his thinking. He has argued not so much that socialism will make men virtuous but that socialism requires a higher standard of moral behavior than capitalism. (Indeed, that is one of the most serious arguments that can be raised against socialism.) The theory of socialism still does not mean much to him. The weakness, a general English one, is regrettable, but did not lead him to allow the Communist Party to join in Labor's ranks.

Before 1914 Attlee began to learn the full range of local politics and Party organization and the educational process continued after World War I in which he served for the duration. The Party gave him his first taste of power but it was power for the service of Labor, within the framework of the British constitution. Between 1931 and 1935, when Labor in opposition was gravely reduced in numbers, Attlee was compelled to acquire a very wide familiarity with the procedure of the House of Commons. The years (1940-1945) of the Churchill coalition gave him a further mastery of domestic affairs. Eventually he became a most able political tactician.

His autobiography caters little to the interest in revelations. It presents the very model of a reserved British gentleman—who is a socialist politician. As Labor's leader Attlee is not so frank about his Party's prewar mistakes as was Ernest Bevin. Here and there he provides fresh glimpses of Labor's history and some insights into British Government. At other times the reader may be understandably incredulous about the consistent propriety of the author's reactions and sentiments. At any rate here is the story of a man who helped to make the British Welfare State, to carry out the great change announced fifty years ago by the Independent Labor Party's Keir Hardie: "The demand of the Labor Party is for economic freedom. It is the natural outcome of political enfranchisement." It is a pity that this book's reserved author chose to tell so little of it.

Love and War

A TIME TO LOVE AND A TIME TO DIE. By Erich Maria Remarque. Harcourt, Brace. $3.95.

By JOHN A. LYNCH

PERHAPS it is unfair to ask more of a book than what is written in it. That is, given Germany in the unhappy days of 1944 (the Russians were carrying their drive westward), given war, given a city in near-ruins, perhaps we should not question that the author has chosen to find here not the symptoms of tragedy but the vehicle for a melodramatic love story.

Certainly, there was love among the ruins—and the theme is legitimate—certainly, many a soldier on leave did take a girl for a lover and/or, as in the present case, a wife; but out of a disordered, visionless, humorless Germany, we have come to expect, I think, something that is at once more revealing and more profound, and, if I may use the term, more realistic, than what is dredged up here. For Germany,

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1944, love doesn't seem to be the vital thing.

Yet it is possible that Remarque did intend the story to be tragic (aren't the lovers finally separated and doesn't Ernst get killed on the last page?), but compounding as he does the fictional herbs of propaganda and patriotism, sentiment and sex, and off-the-cuff philosophy, it should have been obvious from the start that any good intentions were doomed.

Structurally, the love story is caught up between two extended moments on the eastern front, before and after Ernst Graeber's leave. The first of these, in which we are introduced to a number of infantry types, the good soldier, the *SS* soldier, the part-Jewish soldier, the Communism-courting soldier, gives us two important clues to the story's success: subtlety is not going to play any part here, and Graeber, on whom the story is going to depend, is not, after all, a tragic figure.

On his three weeks leave from the front, Graeber meets, loves and marries Elizabeth Kruse. They wander through the streets of the city of Werden, Graeber looking for his parents, Elizabeth to and from her apartment and her job, and together into the ruins as lovers, coming across along the way such characters as are likely to populate Germany at this time, the good man and the bad man, the professor in hiding and the *SA* commander in open luxury, who, depending on their sympathies, respond with various basic notions about life, love and death, war and peace.

Ernst and Elizabeth themselves, with repeated asides of *mea culpa,* give us the idea that all is not well, that Hitler is a madman and that there are plenty of good Germans, themselves among them, but the problem of the moment is that they are under a totalitarian form of government. Elizabeth wants to bear Ernst's child in order that she might educate it against the poisons of the Third Reich, and Ernst says that, though he dislikes being an accomplice to slavery and murder and the concentration camp, he more or less has to save his own hide.

Professor Pohlmann speaks of the world vision, of humanity at large and the need to check despair (but of course he is carried away), and soldier Steinbrenner speaks fondly of the police state and the clean-up battalions (but he gets shot by Graeber who can't quite see it that way).

The good and the bad, a plea for tolerance, a view of corruption, love conquers all: this is the novel. Yet its visual properties are good and clean, and its political intentions, although often clumsily stated, honorable.

The Way of Spain

THE SPANISH TEMPER. By V. S. Pritchett. Knopf. $3.75.

By GEOFFREY ASHE

WHEN I saw the author's name on *The Spanish Temper,* my heart sank. Pritchett of the *New Statesman,* that literary disemboweller of Thomas Merton and Evelyn

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Waugh, hardly seemed the person to write about Spain. However, my apprehension proved baseless. Socialist and agnostic though he be, his account of a leisurely expedition through the central and eastern parts of Iberia is graceful, perceptive, and studiously impartial.

There is, of course, the religious question, and we may as well get it over with. Pritchett's attitude here is colored by his attitude to religion in general. He apparently endorses the well-known regional principle adopted after the Thirty Years' War. Spain is a "Catholic country," England is a "Protestant country," and each should abide by its own faith or by none. Against English or American Catholics he explodes in wrath and derision; but Spanish Catholicism is different. A creed, to V. S. Pritchett, is not a statement of truth but the expression of a culture and a historical process — in this case, seven centuries of national war against the Mohammedans.

Hence his view manifests itself in a somewhat deceptive sympathy. He can talk kindly and sensibly about Spanish Catholicism, its good and bad points, its effect on art, its expression in local customs. But no suspicion that it could have an absolute claim on human belief ever intrudes upon his thoughts. Indeed, he is so preoccupied with the religious cultural pattern, as distinct from the religion, that he scarcely inquires to what extent the Spaniards do actually believe. He elaborately depicts a "Catholic country," but fails to stress what many careful observers have noted—that Spain is a Catholic country with far too few practicing Catholics.

So much for the largest and most dangerous matter. On Spanish political affairs Pritchett is very interesting. He interprets recent history in terms of two trends: first, a Europeanizing movement beginning after the war with America, distinguished by liberalism and a passing revival of literature and art; then, reaction into an incompetent and isolationist form of Fascism, with Europe retreating beyond the Pyrenees. He has discarded one myth which the Left hung on to for years — that Franco keeps myriads of political prisoners—and he acknowledges the existence of reasonably free speech. He even has some good words to say for the *Caudillo's* private virtues. On the other hand he insists (doubtless with truth) that hardly anybody likes the regime, and that the social services and vertical syndicates of the new order are little better than empty forms.

However, to say these things concerning *The Spanish Temper* is to say little. Pritchett is far ahead of most Left-wing travelers in his awareness of Spain's intensely alien quality. Descriptions and anecdotes beautifully conveying that quality constitute the main stuff of the book. Food, houses, streetcars, singers, bullfighters—the images are swarming and vivid. What emerges most clearly is the way Spain has preserved the dignity of the person despite all her social chaos. Pritchett manages to bring in Don Quixote and Sancho Panza without making the allusion look trite. The Spaniard, he thinks, is either a fanatic for some great cause, or an incorrigibly

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self-seeking anarchist. Yet in both roles he keeps his dignity. He stares at you out of his sun-scorched poverty and does not in the least envy you your refrigerator.

Spain has a tremendous past. Her decay is simply the aftermath of an effort which peopled and civilized the greater part of the New World, from Cape Horn to Canada. Has Spain a future? Not perhaps in any very positive sense. Franco is hopeless, and, as Pritchett remarks, the exiled opposition is out of touch. Yet *The Spanish Temper* includes the following memorable paragraph:

> The general attitude of the Spaniard, from the cave-dweller to the grandee, to those who point out the beauties of social reform, better health and housing, is possibly polite agreement, but it is generally angry resentment; fundamentally, the attitude is that it is we who live in a spiritual slum which the Spaniards could rescue us from, if they felt the effort worth while—but they do not. In a few years we shall have blown ourselves to pieces or killed ourselves off by a germ warfare, and the survivors will then see the irresistible but unattainable advantage of the Spanish way of life.

And maybe they will.

The Sin of Adam

THE GARDEN TO THE SEA. By Philip Toynbee. Doubleday. $3.

By JEAN HOLZHAUER

RECENTLY Mr. Philip Toynbee published in England a memoir of two friends who died in the Spanish Civil War. The book, *Friends Apart,* was praised by V. S. Pritchett and other critics as a particularly vivid and perceptive study of both the men who were its subject and the political combat which cost their lives.

Perhaps by virtue of his residence in Madrid in 1937 and of the insights fostered by close friendship, Mr. Toynbee was unusually equipped for success with such a book. *The Garden to the Sea,* an

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experimental novel just published, falls short of its expectations.

Apparently an attempt to weld traditional religion and modern psychological insight, the story on one level parallels the story of the fall of man. The protagonist, Adam, ill in a hospital, reviews his previous life in three episodes, each enacted by an *alter ego*. The flashback begins with his happy marriage with Daisy, and their life together in a country house by the sea. At the onset of war, Adam becomes fighter pilot and changes from serene and contented young husband to roisterous soldier.

At the war's end, he returns to find Daisy embittered and makes a second change, to a cynical libertine. Daisy counters—out of necessity, the story would have us believe—by falling in love with another young man. They quarrel, and Adam in a fit of jealousy and self-reproach strikes Daisy and leaves her. He walks out of the house and the garden, feeling that his loss is complete.

Reliving this past from his hospital bed, Adam sees his other selves as separate identities named respectively Noel (the happy husband), Tom (the pilot), and Charley (the debauchee). The novel is written in the form of dialogue between Adam and these three inner voices. A sample:

Adam: "But all of this, in any case, was a later time, and how shall I think of it until the time between is filled?"

Charley: "You won't find any sooner or later here. You won't find a before and after, however much you snuffle and root for a pattern and a progress. Time dropped off when you slunk off the island, and all your cities and Janets will whirl about you like a snowstorm."

As the excerpts indicate, Adam's selves are inclined to a kind of posturing and verbosity which frequently spirals into windy philosophy. Without doubt this is a tendency to be watched in the other selves of each of us. There is a question, however, whether it can be used effectively as the chief substance of a novel. The style, often musical, seems sometimes derivative of Joyce, sometimes of Eliot and Auden.

In their respective conversations, Noel and Tom suggest to Adam that he has remained blameless in the episodes involving them. Later Charley turns up with the reverse judgment that Adam has sinned, in fact beyond redemption. In the final pages, with more common sense than one would credit him, Adam rejects them all, and feels the stirring of an unseen power which may lift him out of his degradation.

REVIEWERS

Daniel M. Friedenberg is a New York businessman who has spent considerable time in Africa and has written about that continent for a number of American periodicals.

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Jean Holzhauer writes frequently for The Commonweal.

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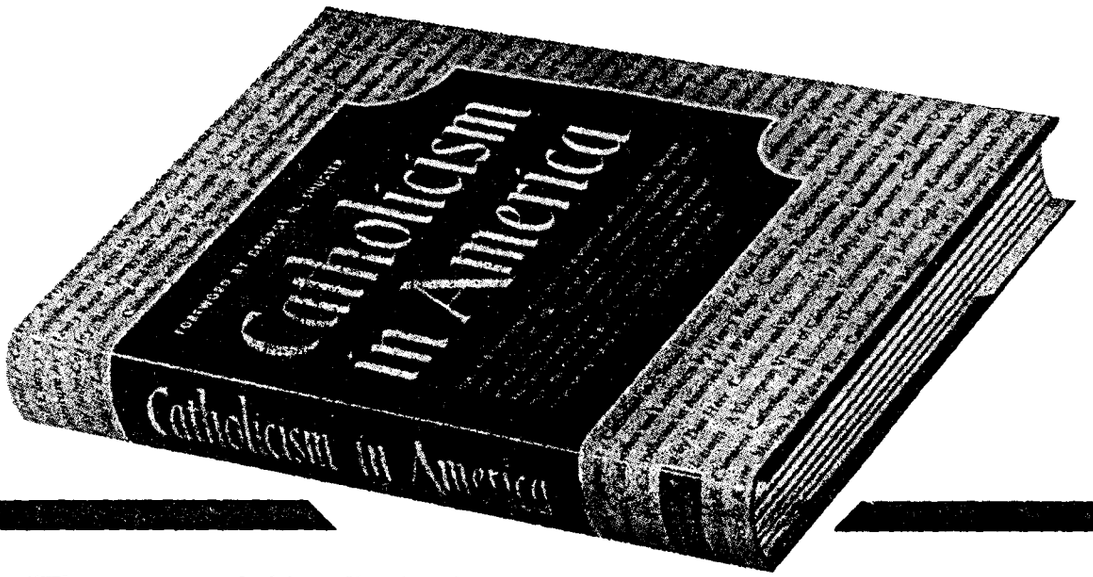

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